GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2649
ANSWERED ON:20.03.2002
ATTACKS ON INDIAN FISHERMEN
PALANIYAPPA GOUNDER KUMARASAMY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of reported attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy during the last one year;

(b) the steps taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the Sri Lankan Government has honoured the Kachathevu agreement;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the Government stand thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) & (b) There were eight reported incidents of firing on Indian fishermen last year. Government of India takes up every reported incident of shooting of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy with the Government of Sri Lanka and has emphasised the need to avoid such incidents. Sri Lanka Government has denied involvement of its Navy in a large majority of cases. It has also assured Government of India that its forces are under instructions to exercise maximum restraint in dealing with Indian fishermen found in Sri Lankan waters.

(c) to (e) Government of India regards the delineation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary through the Agreements of 1974 and 1976 as a settled matter. In terms of these Agreements, the island of Kachchativu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the International Boundary Line. The Agreement states that Indian fishermen and pilgrims will enjoy access to visit Kachchativu as hitherto, and will not be required by Sri Lanka to obtain travel documents or visas for these purposes. Fulfillment of these traditional rights has been in abeyance since 1983 due to the security situation in the Palk Straits.